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LA CHIESA E I NUOVI TEMPI. Scritti di GIOVANNI PIOLI, ROMOLO MURRI, GIOVANNI MEILLE, UGO JANNI, MARIO FALCHI, MARIO ROSSI, QUI QUONDAM, ANTONINO DE STEFANO, ALFREDO TAGLIALATELA. Edited by the Baptist Theological School of Rome. 1917. Pp. xxxii, 307. L. 3.50.

There are books the importance of which is not so much in their content as in the mere fact of their publication. The present volume belongs to such a class of books. Under the general title, *The Church and the New Times*, it contains ten chapters on various topics due to nine different writers, and an Introduction by Dr. Whittinghil, President of the Baptist Theological School of Rome. With few exceptions, the authors of the various chapters are former Italian Modernists, some of whom now belong to Protestantism, while others live outside any religious denomination. The attempt of the Italian Protestants to win to their cause the excommunicated Italian Modernists as a whole was a failure, not only because the content and the purpose of Modernism were not converging towards Protestantism either orthodox or liberal, but also on account of the peculiar conditions of Italian Protestantism, which makes no appeal to the Italian religious conscience. Dr. Whittinghil, however, succeeded in making friends with quite a number of them, especially through his monthly Review, *Bilychnis*, which is the only Italian religious review giving hospitality to the Modernist writers, who lack a periodical publication of their own.

The present book is the outcome of the spirit of collaboration which was created by the exchange of ideas established among the ordinary contributors to the same review, and it may be considered as the first open attempt to find a common ground for their religious thought and their religious activity as well. We cannot say, however, that it has been carried on very successfully, although we do not find in this book either any trace of the traditional Baptist theology or a constructive theology on a Modernist line. What we find is but a kind of diluted and elastic theological romanticism, together with an indictment of the Roman Catholic Church, reproducing the main points of accusation familiar to the old Protestant polemicists.

Dr. Whittinghil says in his introduction that "the word 'Church, as it is used in this volume, regards especially the Roman Catholic Church" (p. xxi); but as a matter of fact the criticism, which is in general directed against the Roman Catholic Church, can be as well applied, and it is frequently applied by the writers themselves, to the various Protestant Churches. For this part the book has

a Modernist rather than a Protestant flavor; but other chapters, and especially those on the social question, on philosophy and theology and on morals, the compilation of which was handed to the Protestant contributors, display that kind of inconsistent eclecticism which is peculiar to the modern Italian Protestants.

The first chapter, under the title "Church and Churches" by G. Pioli, aims to be a comparison of the religious life as it is to be found in Roman Catholicism and in Protestantism, and is to the full advantage of the latter. The main charge brought against the Roman Church is its being a close field, while Protestantism is on the way towards a final religious unity which shall include even the non-Christian religions of the East. "The orthodoxies," he says, "will become the orthodoxy when they shall realize the relativity and symbolism of forms, rites, and canons; and the churches will not become the Church unless they lose themselves in order to find themselves" (p. 53). This phrase is in great favor with the preachers of today; but impressive as it is in its biblical clothing, it is none the less void of content unless it is taken as a total and complete rejection of the fundamental ideas necessarily connected with the kind of institutions that we call Churches. But then, why keep the name, if the thing itself is gone? To have falsified Christianity by putting new wine into old bottles, is a common charge against the Roman Church. Would not this be exactly the same process?

An equally wholesale condemnation of the whole system of the Churches is the conclusion of the second chapter on "Church and State," by the well-known writer, R. Murri. "The distinction between the two institutions," he says, "is substantially formal; but the form in this case is the content itself. Everything is religion and everything is politics; only the point of view is different, the momentum of the spirit which actuates itself" (p. 75). This whole chapter has a rather enigmatic form; but if these words have any meaning, they cannot be interpreted but as a flat denial of the right of all the Churches to be considered as *personæ* in the *pólis*.

The third chapter on "The Church and the Social Question," by G. Meille, deals primarily with the economic side of the problem and makes also some astonishing revelations. It is said, for instance, that Pope Leo XIII betrayed the true interests of the working classes in his encyclicals on the social question, because "he understood that his adhesion to the doctrines with socialistic flavor of some Catholic bishops, would have alienated from him the sympathies of the European governments." And "that," he concludes,

"is a clear demonstration that to socialize the Roman Church, the first condition is to transform its organization, which is essentially political, into an organization essentially religious" (p. 86); as if Pope Leo was unaware that the fundamental principles of Socialism are antithetical to Catholic theology and cannot be reconciled to it, or as if although being fully aware of such an opposition he could overlook it and do as he pleased. No less sweeping is the final identification assumed by the author of "Church, Religion, and Social Service," as if they were mere names of the same thing.

In the following chapter U. Janni rejects the solutions of the problem of religious knowledge offered by the intellectualistic as well as by the anti-intellectualistic philosophies. According to him, religious knowledge "finds its origin in the revealing act of the Holy Ghost, which brings Christ and with Christ God Himself to dwell in us. The mystic apprehension of the divine is given us by the reaction of the soul to this revealing act of the Holy Ghost" (pp. 129-130). This reaction is the work of the whole man, reason and will, working together and not as distinct energies. As for the object of this knowledge, it is "the idea that the absolute we are dependent upon is neither the absolute impersonal, nor the divine immanent in the soul, but the living personal God, who transcends the human soul and makes Himself felt in this very transcendency, although we do not understand how such a thing happens" (p. 132). The starting point here being a revelation of the Holy Ghost to individual souls, no wonder that in such a knowledge there is no room for the understanding. *Credo ut intelligam*. Is that Protestant or is it Modernist? We find also that the author is too optimistic in his idea of life in the early Church, when he invokes today that liberty of theological speculation "which was to be found in the Church of the early centuries."

Less interesting is the chapter on "Church and Science" by M. Falchi, and the following two on "Church and Criticism" by M. Rossi and Qui Quondam. They give a rapid outline of the well-known struggle between positive science and theology and of the history of biblical criticism. The authors of those chapters do not fail to remark that if Catholicism was guilty against science, Protestantism was not wholly innocent; but in some historical details they exaggerate the Catholic guilt while they soften the guilt of the Protestants.

More interesting and as a whole well outlined is De Stefano's chapter on "Church and Heresy," although there is a kind of overestimation of the progressive function of heresy, and an under-

estimation of the real value of the coercive function of orthodoxy, which helps a great deal in eliminating all the trash inseparable from all heretical movements, while what is vital in them is really beyond the reach of the reactionary power. We are afraid that in his synthetical judgment the author looked at the matter more "*sub specie æternitatis*" than with his usual historical accuracy.

The last chapter, by Rev. A. Tagliatela, deals with "Church and Morals." Here we have the usual indictment of Casuistry and Probabilism as representative of all Catholic ethics, and the no less usual quotation of some words of Harnack, who speaks of "the comprehensive ethical books of the Jesuits" as "*monstra* of abomination," etc.; words which are the *locus communis* of all the anti-Catholic polemics against confession and against the Jesuits. But if it was quite a blunder for Harnack to consider the Jesuit casuistry as the ethical code of Catholicism, there is no reason why his words must be reverently repeated like a biblical quotation by Rev. A. Tagliatela, who seems to know something about Casuistry. No less inexact is his assumption that the practice of confession leads *necessarily* the Catholic soul to lose the capacity of passing judgment upon itself. On the contrary, the practice of confession, as it is understood by the Church, is directed exactly to the development of such a capacity to its utmost efficiency. Confession calls for frequent and careful examinations of conscience, which are but informal auto-judgments; and after all, what else is the confession of his own guilt but a true judgment passed by the penitent upon himself?

In the same unfair spirit Rev. A. Tagliatela speaks of Catholic intolerance; and it is interesting to notice that his words provoked some unfavorable comments from other contributors to *Bilychnis* (Issues of August and September, 1917), especially that of Qui Quondam, who remarked that he misinterpreted a passage from Newman.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While he does not deny that there are muddy waters even in Protestantism, he finds a radical difference in the fact that, after all, the Protestant churches possess the *true* Christ, whilst the Christ of the Catholics is but "an anæmic, spineless, byzantine Jesus," who inspires "a subtle sense of fear" (p. 305). Apart from the strange figure of a *spineless* Christ, who yet is capable of inspiring fear, it would not be unfair to ask Mr. Tagliatela of which Protestant Christ he speaks—of the Christ of the orthodox Protestant theology, or of the Jesus of the liberal theology? And which one of them is truly the Jesus of "the four evangelical biographies," to which he makes appeal? The charge of worshipping a boneless Christ was usually brought by Catholic polemicists of yore against Protestantism, especially on account of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. How comes it now to be turned against the Catholics themselves?

Such being the content of the book, we wonder why the editor did not think a fitter title for it would be "*The Churches and the Old Times*," instead of "*The Church and the New Times*." It is neither a Protestant nor a Modernist book, and it is not a consistent attempt at a constructive religious thought independent of both. It is essentially a polemical book. That is why it is a failure. That is why all the good that is in it will pass unnoticed and remain sterile. What the religious spirit of the new Italy needs now is wholly different and very far from the traditional style and language of the old anti-Catholic pamphlets. In this historical moment much more efficient would be the voice of a mystic speaking the simple language of love, than all the religious-philosophical precisions couched in a semi-Hegelian and semi-Kantian language, which is everything but clear and anything but Italian.

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INDIA AND ITS FAITHS. A Traveller's Record. JAMES BISSETT PRATT.  
The Houghton Mifflin Co. 1915. Pp. xi, 483. \$4.00.

India was the objective of the first deliberate outward movement from Europe after the Crusades, albeit the immediate result in the year 1492 was the discovery of America. Again, the first deliberately outreaching movement from the new world of the West was directed, past Europe, toward the same alluring land of the East. This time the motive was not geographical discovery nor political domination nor commercial trade, but a friendly religious interest. It was the foreign missionary movement, which was begun by a group of Williams College students in 1806 (only seventeen years after the adoption of the national Constitution). The first missionaries who went from the United States went to India, and landed in Calcutta. Driven away by the East India Co., they went elsewhere in India. Following that lead, American missionaries have spread into all the non-Christian countries, so that now they are more than twice as numerous as the representatives of the United States in the listed Diplomatic and Consular Service.

During the century which has elapsed since the first connection with India, the United States has acquired absolutely no political connection and relatively slight commercial connection with that distant country. But the religious interest has not diminished. The most scholarly book in any language on the subject of "*The Religions of India*" is by an American Professor of Sanskrit (E. W.